

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 HA-05 IO-13 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /099 W

-----009662 161819Z /43

R 161110Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY BAMA KO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8908

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BAMA KO 1248

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ML

SUBJ: MALIAN MILITARY ARRESTS: UP-DATE AND SUMMARY

REF: (A) BAMA KO 0968, (B) BAMA KO 0990, (C) BAMA KO 1157

1. SUMMARY: ARRESTS CONTINUE AS PRESIDENT TRAORE RETURNS FROM FUND-RAISING TRIP TO ARAB STATES. INVESTIGATION OF COUP PLOT IMPLICATES LARGE NUMBER OF MILITARY AND POLICE OFFICERS AND SOME CIVILIANS. PRESIDENT IS APPARENTLY TAKING MORE PERSONAL ROLE IN MALIAN LEADERSHIP. END SUMMARY.

2. MORE ARRESTS. PRESIDENT MOUSSA TRAORE RETURNED FROM SUCCESSFUL TRIP TO SAUDI ARABIA AND UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (SEPTEL) TO A CAPITAL THAT REMAINED OUTWARDLY TRANQUIL DURING HIS ABSENCE. BEHIND SCENES, CONFIDENTIAL

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HOWEVER, FORCES LOYAL TO PRESIDENT MAINTAINED STEADY RHYTHM OF ARRESTS. OVER WEEKEND, ALL BAMA KO POLICE "COMMISSAIRES" WERE ARRESTED AND A NUMBER OF CIVIL SERVANTS AND BUSINESSMEN WERE REPORTED DETAINED. PRESIDENT'S MEN HAVE APPARENTLY ELIMINATED POSSIBILITY OF RESISTANCE BY OPPOSITION.

3. RADIO MALI ANNOUNCED MARCH 13 AND OFFICIAL DAILY L'ESSOR PUBLISHED MARCH 14 A LIST OF 33 MILITARY AND POLICE OFFICERS ARRESTED FOR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN ABORTED COUP. IN ADDITION TO CHIEFS-OF-STAFF OF GENDARMERIE AND ARMY, VICE CHIEF-OF-STAFF OF AIR FORCE, AND COMMANDERS OF KATI BASE AND BAMAKO PARATROOP COMPANY, LIST NAMES SEVERAL LOW-RANKING POLICE OFFICERS WHO HAD REPORTEDLY BEEN BRIEFED BY THEN SECURITY CHIEF BAGAYOKO REGARDING THEIR DUTIES DURING PLANNED COUP.

4. WIDE-SPREAD COLLUSION. "EVIDENCE" FROM ON-GOING INVESTIGATION INTO COUP PLOT SUGGESTS THAT MINISTER OF DEFENSE DOUKARA, DIRECTOR OF SECURITY SERVICES BAGAYOKO, AND MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS BEMBELE DID PLAN ELABORATE COUP STRATEGY INCLUDING MASS DEMONSTRATIONS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN AND INVOLVING MANY HIGH OFFICIALS IN ITS OPERATION. SUSPICION OF COMPLICITY OR AT LEAST FOREKNOWLEDGE TOUCHES EVERY MEMBER OF MILITARY COMMITTEE FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION (CMLN) EXCEPT PERHAPS SECRETARY GENERAL LT. COLONEL FILIFING SISSOKO, MINISTER OF EDUCATION LT. COLONEL YOUSSEF TRAORE, AND MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS LT. COLONEL MISSA KONE. NUMEROUS OFFICERS AND SOME CIVIL SERVANTS AND BUSINESSMEN MAY HAVE BEEN INVOLVED.

5. FOREIGN MINISTER'S LOT. EX-FOREIGN MINISTER
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COLONEL CHARLES SAMBA CISSOKHO IS SAID TO HAVE DISCUSSED POSSIBLE COUP WITH PRESIDENT BEFORE LEAVING FOR OAU FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING IN TRIPOLI BUT FAILED TO REVEAL HIS OWN COMPLICITY, THUS PRECIPITATING HIS LATER ARREST. DOCUMENT REPORTEDLY SEIZED AFTER FEBRUARY 28 LISTS CISSOKHO AS TITULAR PRESIDENT OF POST-COUP GOVERNMENT. YET CISSOKHO'S INVOLVEMENT MAY HAVE BEEN PERIPHERAL AND PRESIDENT IS GIVING HIM CONSIDERATION. HE HAS NOT BEEN STRIPPED OF MILITARY RANK AS HAVE OTHER CMLN PLOTTERS, AND AT LAST WORD HE HAS BEEN RETURNED TO HIS HOME, WHERE HE REMAINS UNDER DETENTION.

6. PRESIDENT FOREWARNED. PRESIDENT TRAORE WAS EVIDENTLY AWARE OF POTENTIAL CHALLENGE TO HIS POWER. IN INTERVIEW GRANTED TO ALGERIAN PRESS AND PUBLISHED HERE MARCH 13, PRESIDENT SAID PLOT HAD BEEN HATCHING A LONG TIME AND FACT THAT IT HAD JUST BEEN FORESTALLED WAS DUE TO HIS PATIENCE WITH PLOTTERS AND NUMEROUS EFFORTS UNDERTAKEN TO BRING THEM BACK TO REASON. VICE CHIEF-OF-STAFF OF GENDARMERIE, MAJOR MAHAMADOU KEITA, NOW INTERIM HEAD OF GENDARMERIE, SERVED AS INTERMEDIARY

BETWEEN

TWO CAMPS IN CONCILIATION WCFORT AND ALERTED
PRESIDENT THAT OPPOSITION WAS DETERMINED TO STAGE COUP.

7. INTERIM APPOINTMENTS. PRESIDENT TRAORE NOW FACES
DIFFICULT TASK OF CHOISING NEW LEADERSHIP FOR VACANT
MILITARY AND CABINET POSTS FROM AMONG PERSONNEL WHOSE
LOYALTY IS STILL SUSPECT. MOST VACATED POSITIONS ARE
NOW BEING HANDLED ONLY IN ACTING CAPACITIES. PRESIDENT
TOLD ALGERIAN PRESS THAT, FOLLOWING EVENTS OF FEBRU-
ARY 28, HE HAD TAKEN MEASURES TO PURGE ADMINISTRATION
AND STATE ENTERPRISES. WE CAN THUS EXPECT IMPORTANT
CHANGES IN MALIAN CIVIL SERVICE OVER NEXT WEEKS AND
RESULTANT PARALYSIS OF ADMINISTRATION IN THE INTERIM.
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8. SECURITY PROBLEMS. ABSENCE OF LEADERS AND UNCER-
TAINTY ABOUT EXTENT OF CURRENT PURGE LEAVE POLICE AND
SECURITY SERVICES IN DISARRAY. SECRETARY GENERAL OF
CMLN, FILIFING SISSOKO, ASSURED POLICE OFFICERS OF
BAMA KO, KATI, AND KOULIKORO IN SPECIAL MEETING
MARCH 13 THAT ARRESTS WERE MADE ON BASIS OF INVOLVEMENT
IN COUP PLOT, NOT BECAUSE OF FORMER TIES WITH EX-
DIRECTOR OF SECURITY. SISSOKO URGED OFFICERS TO HONOR
THEIR UNIFORM BY FILLING GAPS IN LEADERSHIP AND ASSUR-
ING PROTECTION OF CITIZENS. CAPTAIN AMADOU TOURE HAS
BEEN NAMED INTERIM COORDINATOR OF POLICE ACTIVITIES
AND SECURITY SERVICES.

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9. PRESIDENT'S IMAGE. PRESIDENT TRAORE IS TAKING MORE PERSONAL ROLE IN MALIAN LEADERSHIP. IN RESPONSE DURING ALGERIAN PRESS INTERVIEW, PRESIDENT, WHO USUALLY CLOAKS STATEMENT IN COLLECTIVE AUTHORITY OF CMLN, REFERRED TO HIS PERSONAL EFFORTS IN RECENT EVENTS AND AFFIRMED THAT "I, MOUSSA, WILL ALWAYS REMAIN FAITHFUL TO MY OATH OF OFFICE." EVENTS OF PAST WEEKS MAY ELEVATE PRESIDENT TO HEROIC STATURE AND ESTABLISH HIM AS SINGLE CHOICE FOR MALI'S LEADER WITHIN ANY NEW POLITICAL STRUCTURE.

9. CONCLUSION. PRESIDENT TRAORE, BY ABORTING A BROADLY BASED COUP PLOT, HAS FIRMLY ESTABLISHED HIS AUTHORITY AND IS NOW IN A POSITION TO DIRECT HIS COUNTRY TOWARD PROMISED CONSTITUTIONAL RULE. REPRESENTATION OF COUP HAS, HOWEVER, ELIMINATED LEADERSHIP

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IN KEY MILITARY COMMANDS AND LEAVES SECURITY SITUATION PRECARIOUS. AS SUSPICION SPREADS AND ARRESTS CONTINUE, MALIAN ADMINISTRATION IS BECOMING TOTALLY ABSORBED IN AFTERMATH OF PREEMPTED COUP. IT WILL BE SOME TIME BEFORE AFFAIRS OF STATE IN MALI RETURN TO NORMAL COURSE.

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